



Good Morning Senator Cohen, Representative Gresko and distinguished members of the Environment Committee. My name is **Kies Orr**, and I am a 4th generation dairy Farmer's daughter located in Thompson, CT, at **Fort Hill Farms**. We milk 200 cows and have about 500 cows' total. We milk twice a day, among many other chores on the farm. I am here to testify in [SUPPORT of House Bill 6503](#)

About 5+ years ago, my father Peter Orr had a dream and said, "I want to be the first Anaerobic Digester in CT to make a path for future on-farm Digesters." My father put a lot of time and effort into this dream, but sadly he passed in 2018 at a young age. I looked at the rest of my family and said, we need to continue this for Pete! So, we picked ourselves up and farmed on. Without Pete here, this process has not been easy to continue his dream without him. But here we are in 2021, and we did it! We started construction in 2020, nonetheless a pandemic, but we had a great team behind us pushing us along.

Throughout this process, I think the permitting was the toughest every time we turned around; there was another hurdle after we thought we were good. If there is anything you can do for future digesters is to ease up on some of the permitting.

As someone that has been in operation for about six weeks with our Anaerobic Digester, I support the changes proposed to this bill.

I Increase the amount of food waste for on-farm digesters: In 2019, PA 19-35 was passed, which allowed certain on-farm AD projects to be permitted without going through a DEEP solid waste permitting process provided the "The feedstock for such anaerobic digestion facility is at least 50% by volume farm-generated organic waste from an animal feeding operation and not more than 5% by volume food scraps, food processing residuals and soiled or unrecyclable paper"; At the time this was negotiated there was no methodology to derive at the 5% other than it was low enough not to appear a threat to facilities like Quantum and the law was passed.

Since then, there has been renewed interest on the part of the legislature to potentially expand the amount of food waste an on-farm AD could procure and still not have to be permitted as a solid waste facility. Rather than raise the percent, we came up with language to amend the 2019 law to allow a farm to take in food waste so long as the farm conforms with its comprehensive nutrient management plan. This avoids a specific percentage. See the underlined text on page 2 of the attached bill.

Expedited permitting: This is an attempt to require DEEP to approve or deny on-farm digesters within 90 days of application receipt. While this may not be realistic, but it is an attempt to expedite the process. See underlined text on pages 3 & 4 of the attached bill.